

**MEDIA RELEASE**  
**Wednesday, 14 July 2010**

## **Environment groups unite to oppose proposal for a five-year moratorium on new marine parks in NSW**

The NSW government has turned against the tide of scientific and community support for marine parks and sanctuaries by offering its 'in principle' support for a five-year moratorium on new marine parks in NSW, according to Australia's leading environment groups.

An alliance of 38 conservation organisations representing more than 590,000 Australians has condemned the State government's support for the Marine Parks Amendment (Moratorium) Bill as a dangerous set back for marine conservation in NSW.

The overwhelming scientific evidence shows marine parks and their sanctuary zones provide vital protection for aquatic habitats and marine life, including rare and threatened species. They help maintain or increase the number and size of fish populations; build resilience into ecosystems so they can cope with human impacts such as climate change; and contribute financial and tourism benefits to local communities.

"Marine parks play an absolutely essential role in maintaining the long-term health and sustainability of our oceans," said Executive Director of the National Parks Association of NSW, Kevin Evans.

"The local community understands the importance of marine parks in safeguarding the long-term future of their favourite fishing and swimming locations, with a recent survey of Sydney residents finding 89 per cent want the protection of the marine environment even if it meant some fishing restrictions<sup>1</sup>."

Leading scientific and conservation organisations, including the Australian Marine Sciences Association and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), have called for an expansion of marine parks as the best way for fish stocks and marine ecosystems to survive and thrive.

"A five-year ban on new marine parks in NSW is out of step with public opinion and the advice of scientists from around the world. It would put NSW firmly at odds with the growing global recognition of the value of marine protected areas," said Chief Executive Officer of the Nature Conservation Council of NSW, Pepe Clarke.

"Only last month, more than 263 scientists from 39 countries confirmed their support for the creation of large-scale ocean marine parks as the best way to help fish stocks recover<sup>2</sup>."

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<sup>1</sup> *Who Cares About the Environment in 2009?* Survey, NSW Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water

<sup>2</sup> Global Ocean Legacy statement, Pew Environment Group (June 8, 2010) <http://bit.ly/aTRWaB>

“Closer to home, the South Australian government is creating a network of 19 marine parks covering 44% of state waters and the Australian government is establishing an extensive marine reserve system in Commonwealth waters.

“Any halt on the creation of marine parks in NSW could jeopardise Australia’s international commitments to biodiversity through the significant expansion of its existing marine protected area network by 2012.”

“In this International Year of Biodiversity, Australia should seize the opportunity to create the lasting legacy of a world-class system of marine parks that protect marine habitat, sustain fish stocks and safeguard threatened marine creatures,” he said.

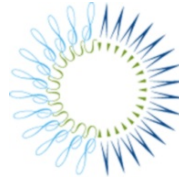
The alliance of environment groups is calling on NSW Labor to reverse its in-principle support for the Marine Parks Amendment (Moratorium) Bill when it returns to parliament in August.

**For more information contact**

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HUMANE SOCIETY  
INTERNATIONAL

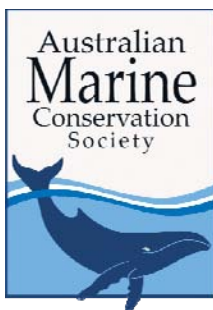


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